

Rapid and Rigorous Evaluations with the Office of Evaluation Sciences Target Equitable Allocation of the American Rescue Plan

The \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan (ARP) represents a unique opportunity to invest in a range of programs and policies that are designed to build an equitable recovery, and will have long-lasting effects on individuals and communities. This type of ground-shifting investment requires that the federal government be intentional and strategic in building evidence to understand how these funds were spent, whether they achieved their intended impact, and how they advance equity. Building evidence to support equitable delivery of ARP resources and future policy interventions is integral to rebuilding existing government-wide services and building trust with the public.

ARP was designed with equity as a through line, with the intent to address historical disparities in outcomes across race, class, and geography that were further exacerbated by the pandemic. Federal agencies and their implementing partners in state, local, and Tribal governments are innovating and finding new ways to achieve these goals, and need support to measure whether these efforts are working as intended. Meeting this challenge requires rigorously testing and evaluating program changes or leveraging opportunities for rigorous retrospective evaluation to identify those practices that will allow us to do better.

The Office of Evaluation Sciences (OES), a team of interdisciplinary experts that work across the federal government to help agencies build and use evidence, will partner with federal agencies to better understand how to improve awareness, access, and allocation of ARP programs and resources. Between FY22-24 OES will initiate a portfolio of 10 rapid evaluations in support of the Administration's efforts to advance an equitable recovery, and to better understand which program changes and innovations within ARP investments contributed to producing equitable outcomes. These evaluations will be staffed by expanding OES' current Fellowship model and will utilize OES' deep expertise in designing and conducting impact evaluations of programs and program changes using administrative data.

What Makes an Opportunity a Good Fit?

OES partners with federal agencies to answer priority questions with rigorous evaluation methods and administrative data. The following components are required for this set of OES ARP evaluations:

- Seeks to understand the equitable outcomes and impacts of ARP investments and fills an important evidence gap.
- Evaluation questions reflect interests of program recipients
- Outcome of interest directly related to an established policy priority, and existing administrative data available on outcome of interest
- Program or Program change has potential for significant impact on a priority outcome, either for target population or for subpopulation
- Institutional commitment to act on and share results
- Target population large enough for policy relevance and/or statistical power, and identification of causal effects for relevant outcomes (where possible, random assignment)



How Will the Collaboration Work?

OES team members will work closely with agency partners to design and implement an evaluation, analyze data, and share findings. To support this work, the OES will:

- Help to design, implement, and evaluate relevant program or process changes using rigorous experimental and quasi-experimental methods
- Provide ongoing technical support including but not limited to: assisting with power calculations, sampling, randomization and random assignment
- Perform data analyses and interpretation throughout the course of the project, complete independent reanalysis of endline data, and write up results
- Communicate regularly with agency and partners to: ensure the evaluation meets agency goals; ensure that evaluations are implemented as planned; share updates on status; and discuss the implications of results
- Share findings from its work with agencies across government. This includes translating findings into project reports and policy memos for broad audiences

To support this effort, collaborating agencies will:

- Identify agency and program learning priorities and refine evaluation opportunities
- Facilitate meetings with stakeholders and implementing partners to inform evaluation design and support adherence to evaluation design
- Assist with troubleshooting as needed to ensure strong implementation of evaluation
- Identify meaningful outcome measures and associated administrative data
- Facilitate data access for OES team members, e.g., current baseline data on identified program outcome, outcome data on all participants for OES analysis and reanalysis
- Collaborate on results interpretation, use and dissemination, and support required approvals

How To Express Interest

If you are interested in collaborating [please fill out this brief form](#). OES will be reviewing submissions on a rolling basis this year through April 2022. Feel free to email questions to elana.safran@gsa.gov.

Learn more about OES work here: <https://oes.gsa.gov/services/>